

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE
		19 Aug 1988
TO: DCI - FYI		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
REMARKS:		
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FROM: Chairman, NIC		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION

FORM NO.  
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REPLACES FORM 36-8  
WHICH MAY BE USED.

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

ACQUISITION REGISTRY

88-3181X

National Intelligence Council

19 August 1988

[REDACTED] USAF

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Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence  
Department of the Air Force  
The Pentagon

Dear General Wood:

Thank you for your letter of 1 August proposing a national intelligence product on Soviet military doctrine. As we agreed in our secure phone conversation of 17 August, developments in Soviet military doctrine are central to our understanding of the entire Soviet challenge under Gorbachev. These developments have several aspects, including relative emphasis on nuclear and non-nuclear capabilities, purported adoption of "defensive defense" and "reasonable sufficiency" as military goals, and continuing shifts in command and force structure. They could affect not only Soviet war plans and force posture, but resource priorities, arms control policies, and civil-military relations.

Unfortunately, it looks like our job of understanding Soviet military doctrine will get harder before it gets easier. The Soviets themselves are debating and, it would appear, changing their doctrine even now. At the same time they are much more intensively than usual trying to influence our perceptions of their doctrine. We shall have to judge the picture they present to us very carefully.

Under these conditions, we shall inevitably have both uncertainties and differences among the NFIB agencies as to what Soviet military doctrine is and where it is going. Our task is to work to reduce those uncertainties and differences while stating them as informatively as possible for policymakers.

This clearly requires a high-priority effort by all NFIB agencies and the National Intelligence Council on Soviet military doctrine. For that reason, I and the National Intelligence Officers affected are sympathetic to the idea of a national product devoted exclusively to this topic, as you propose. However, as you note in your letter, Soviet military doctrine is now being intensively worked on in the preparation of the three major NIEs on Soviet military forces and will be a prominent aspect of a planned NIE [REDACTED] intended for completion around the turn of the year. In doing this work, we have already made

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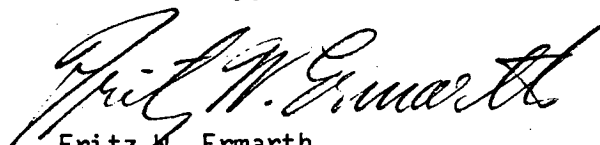
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progress in narrowing differences among NFIB agencies. I am concerned that, if we take the limited pool of real experts on Soviet military doctrine away from the forces estimates they are now working on, these estimates will be further delayed at a time when DOD planning and a change of administrations demand their completion. Moreover, our effort to understand Soviet military doctrine may suffer if we detach it from the context of military forces, politics, and economics in which that doctrine evolves.

Thus, I believe we ought to stay on the present course, completing this fall the three major forces estimates with as much attention to doctrine in them as required, and a comprehensive estimate on Soviet security policies, including military strategy and doctrine, by the end of the year or early in 1989. If we succeed in this, we should have the best possible set of estimative products to put before the new administration. We can then take stock of our differences and uncertainties and reconsider whether a national intelligence product solely focused on Soviet military doctrine is in order.

As I suggested on the phone, this topic seems of such importance that we might consider raising it for discussion at a regular meeting of the NFIB.

Sincerely,

  
Fritz W. Ermarth  
Chairman

cc: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director for Intelligence, CIA  
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency  
Director, National Security Agency  
Assistant Secretary of State for  
Intelligence and Research  
Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,  
Department of the Army  
Director of Naval Intelligence,  
Department of the Navy  
Executive Secretary, National Foreign  
Intelligence Board

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20330

1 Aug 88

Dr Fritz W. Ermarth  
Chairman, National Intelligence Council

Dear Dr Ermarth *Fritz*:

(U) As you are aware, the Soviets claim to have adopted a military doctrine based upon the concept of "reasonable sufficiency." Although the precise meaning of that term is by no means clear and should therefore be treated with considerable skepticism, recent doctrinal discussions in the USSR suggest that significant developments could occur in Soviet force structure and employment. The result may be a much more challenging military threat to the United States and its allies.

(C) Considerable differences exist within the Intelligence Community concerning the nature of current Soviet military doctrine. This controversy is reflected in the sharply divergent presentations of that doctrine found in the latest drafts of NIEs 11-3/8-88 and 11-14-88. I commend you for your efforts to narrow these differences with the recently concluded Overlapping Issues Paper. That paper is a well-balanced examination of several key issues, and we look forward to the incorporation of its conclusions in the two NIEs.

(C) I believe it would be useful for the Intelligence Community to undertake as soon as possible an interagency intelligence memorandum (IIM) or other appropriate product devoted exclusively to an examination of Soviet military doctrine in its totality. Such a vehicle should serve as the baseline document for discussions of doctrine contained in other interagency publications. This should eliminate most of the inconsistency currently found within those publications. I believe it would be appropriate for the office of the National Intelligence Officer for the USSR to take the lead in the drafting of this IIM. Air Force Intelligence analysts are prepared to assist as appropriate in this vitally important project.

*Sincerely,*  
*N*  
C. NORMAN WOOD, Maj Gen, USAF  
Asst Chief of Staff, Intelligence

cc: Director, Defense Intelligence Agency  
Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,  
Department of the Army  
Director of Naval Intelligence,  
Department of the Navy

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